

ARGUMENTS/REMARKS

Applicants would like to thank the examiner for the careful consideration given the present application, and for the personal interview conducted on January 24, 2008 with the Examiner and a supervisory examiner. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action and interview, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe and claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention.

Claims 1-11 and 13-20 remain in this application. Claim 12 has been canceled as the result of an earlier restriction requirement, and applicant retains the right to present that claim in a divisional application. New claims 21-23 are added without adding any new matter.

Claims 1-4, 9-11, 13-15, and 17-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shuto *et al.* (U.S. 6,471,816) in view of Csakvari (U.S. 3,243,862). Claims 5-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shuto and Csakvari in further in view of Nagao *et al.* (U.S. 6,670,541); and claim 16 was rejected as being obvious in light of Shuto and Csakvari in further view of Mimura (U.S. 6,182,403). For the following reasons, the rejections are respectfully traversed.

At the personal interview, it was discussed with the Examiner and her supervisor that the cited prior art did not teach the sealing material as shown in the application. The claims have been amended as suggested at that interview to better represent this feature of the invention. New claim 21 recites similar features. Accordingly, the claims are patentable over the references. Applicant notes that the amendments and the features of new claim 21 are supported by Fig. 7 and paragraphs 0038-0040 of the specification.

In consideration of the foregoing analysis, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

Appl. No. 10/688,596
Amdt. dated February 5, 2008
Reply to Office action of October 9, 2007

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. P+TS-36202.

Respectfully submitted,
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